

Cable Information

Newsletter

for Churchmen and Women,

Educators and

Community Leaders

Rm. 852, 475 Riverside Drive, N. Y., N. Y. 10027 (212) 370-2578

Volume 2 #9

November, 1973

WISCON- On Oct. 10 the Wisconsin Assembly State Affairs Committee recom-
SIN mended passage of a bill based on the Governor's Commission Cable
CABLE Task Force Study but extensively re-drafted (Assembly Bill 635,
BILL Substitute Amendment 2). The amended bill has the Governor's
REPORT- support. Highlights of the amended bill are: uniform state regula-
ED tory standards for passing local cable ordinances and awarding
OUT franchises; cable subscriber-consumer protection against unfair
business practices; cable service extension to rural areas; inter-
community (regional) cable district franchising authorization; ad-
ditional cable access channel provision for urban neighborhoods;
state and local citizen advisory unit formation requirement; dis-
crimination in access to cable services and channel use prohibition;
cable service extension to all schools outside a franchise area
but within a school district if economically feasible and adjacent
franchise authorities agree; facilitation of local cable pro-
gramming and public access.

THE For optimum realization of cable's potential - indeed for its
ISSUE survival - maximum community penetration is essential. The only
OF thing that will guarantee this, in the view of the National Cable
PAY- Television Association is for one or more of the non-TV channels to
CABLE be made available for pay-cable (the offering of "premium" programs
for a fee). NCTA is prepared to spend \$250,000 countering the
opposition of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the
National Association of Theater Owners (NATO) and others. The NAB
warns TV viewers of the possibility of having to pay for sports
events and other "specials" now received "free." NATO is opposed to
cable system control of pay-cable channels, is asking the FCC "to
require the operation of the pay-TV channel on a common-carrier
basis so that the channel will be available to all fair and equal
terms and conditions."

CABLE September 1973 issue of CableLines, monthly newsletter of
CENTER Cablecommunications Resource Center (1900 L. St. N.W., Washington,
FOCUS D.C. 20036) reports results of a study, to be published later this
ON year, of a survey of 111 Black colleges to document their tele-
BLACK communications resources. Study showed that "Black colleges have
COL- the potential, motivation, and capabilities to make a dramatic im-
LEGES act on future educational trends in cable technology. Many of
the Black colleges are presently cablecasting educational and in-
structional programs on campus, using equipment comparable to most
cable systems. With coordinated efforts between the colleges,
guidance from cable specialists, and substantial funding, the
Black colleges could design a communications delivery system unlike
any that are presently in operation or proposed."

HOW WE Studies by the 3/M company have shown that we learn 11 % through
LEARN hearing, 83% through sight; we retain 20% of what we hear, 50% of
what we hear and see.

CITIZEN
FRUSTRA-
TION IN
BALTI-
MORE
COUNTY,
MD.

Perhaps nowhere has the high-handedness of local officials and their callous disregard for the public interest been better documented than in Baltimore County, Md. From late 1972 on the Citizens Planning and Housing Association, through its Exec. Director Christopher C. Hartman, sought by every available means to represent the public interest before the Baltimore County Council. The experience led in the end to the submission to the FCC of a 206 page presentation detailing the illegalities of the procedure and asking the FCC to overturn the award made to one of six applicants. Most informative is a brochure titled "Who Will Run Baltimore County's Cable TV System?" Consisting largely of reprints from the Baltimore Sun of a series of investigative reports by Mary Knudson and Gordon Chaplin, it examines the make-up, the MSO connections, the proposals and their likelihood of fulfillment of each applicant. It tells who the local "front" men are and what each stands to get out of it if his company should win the coveted franchise. It should be widely read. (Write: The Citizens Planning and Housing Association, 600 East Joppa Road, Towson, Md. 21204).

DEAD-
LOCK
IN PALM
SPRINGS

A City Council-appointed Cable Television Committee in Palm Springs, Cal., is currently deadlocked in negotiations with Warner Cable of Palm Springs, subsidiary of Warner Cable Corp., over improvements sought as a condition of 15-year franchise renewal. A study contracted with the MITRE Corp. of McLean, Va., characterizes 10% of the system as obsolete by current standards, 50% approximately up to standard 12 channel capability and 40% as modern cable plant. Three alternative improvement plans call for : a 12 channel capability, a 20-channel capability and a 30-channel dual trunk capability. MITRE has recommended the third, which would provide interactive educational, polling, and shopping services among other new developments. The cable system currently has a high penetration rate of 90%, with 200 miles of cable. Improvements sought would involve an estimated capital investment of \$3.6 million allow a 10% return on total invested capital. The MITRE study showed a 41% profit from June 1965 to December 1972.. The community considers this excessive.

STATE
REGULA-
TION
PROPOSED
IN PA.

A legislative subcommittee, especially critical of the way the City of Philadelphia has supervised its six cable television franchises (granted in 1966) has recommended state regulation in Pennsylvania by the Public Utilities Commission. So far only one of the Philadelphia franchisees has built any kind of cable system. It brings three NY channels to a few hundred customers in South Philadelphia. Contending that Federal regulation is insufficient, the report urges that "the state is therefore the only remaining level at which cures may be instituted for evils created by the local governments.

VIDEO-
TAPE
NETWORKS

"Videotape network" is a new term being used to describe a group of persons or institutions whose common interests are being met through a sharing of videotapes. It can be a number of public libraries using videocassettes to serve patrons with special interests. It can be doctors, lawyers, educators or "video freaks." An entertainment and information videotape programming service (Videotape Networks, Inc., 115 E. 62nd St., NYC) is catering to 250 colleges with campus closed-circuit TV systems. A new medical network is being formed that will serve the 35,000 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

CLEVE- From the keynote address by the Rev. Everett C. Parker (reported
LAND elsewhere) throughout the three days of Sept. 19-21 the Cleveland, O.
WORK- Cable Television Workshop is reported to have given the one hundred
SHOP or more participants all they hoped for and more. Prominent
"SMASH- in the leadership were Prof. George Stoney of NY University's
ING SUC- Alternate Media Center and Ms. Karla Fingerson, Coordinator of
CESS" the Citizens Cable Council of Madison, Wis. "The most important
thing that happened.. was the contact local people were able to
make with the top level 'faculty' - and the many directions in
which these contacts went.. whether developing a community-based
cable council, help in answering questions about franchising,
pointers on local origination programming, minority involvement,
'watch dog' groups.. It was great to see small groups of people
huddled together over a table or off in corner talking intently
with one another. Things really moved."

WATCH- Speaking at the interdenominational cable workshop in Cleveland,
DOG Ohio, on Sept. 19, the Rev. Everett C. Parker called for the
AGENCIES establishment of new, independent national and local "watchdog"
PROPOS- agencies to oversee the operation of cable television. Executive
ED Director of the Office of Communication of the United Church of
CHURCHES Christ and long known for vigorous advocacy of citizen rights in
WARNED broadcasting, Dr. Parker said "The FCC thinks TV and protects
TV. It is incapable of doing imaginative thinking about cable."
Its regulatory policies "are designed to protect the profits of
the cable operators at the expense of the public interest." A
new regulatory agency, the speaker said, might be more effective
than the FCC is setting standards for the cable industry that
would protect the public interest while allowing "reasonable scope
for profitable operation."

Warning that cable franchises are being granted in many communities
without adequate guarantees of public service, Dr. Parker urged
churches and voluntary organizations interested in the public welfare
to "get into the game now before all the dies on rule-making, pro-
gram policies, local and national control issues are cast." The
churches, he said "can get sucked into the vacuum of providing pro-
gram filler for cable systems at a time when the industry desperately
needs anything to light the tube. Their energies are quickly side-
tracked by the cable operator who provides them with a free channel
all their own to produce a steady flow of parochial religious pro-
grams. The Christian communicator's task is to have a major impact
upon the new industry. If he opts for parochialism instead of work-
ing for access to the cable of all voices in the community he will
find in the end he is no longer needed."

CABLE In Albion, Mich., a proposal to add several mills to the tax rate
TO THE for education was roundly defeated. Concerned citizens mounted
RESCUE a cable TV campaign of information. Townspeople were persuaded to
appear on cable in support of the proposal. Their appearances were
advertised and provision made for non-subscribers to view the pro-
grams. On a referendum the measure won by a 2/3 vote. It was
seeing friends and neighbors saying why the measure should be passed
that made the difference.

CABLE On Monday, Oct. 1, TelePrompter Manhattan CATV Corporation began
NET- producing "live" and in color "Wide World News, with Ben Grauer
and Angus Corley," the nation's first regularly-scheduled 45-minute

WORK-
ING
BEGUN

prime-time network program of international and national news, 'to be seen Monday through Friday at 9:30-10:15 p.m. Program starts with a tri-state network of over 25 cable television systems in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, including four of the five largest CATV systems in the U.S. with over 300,000 subscribers.

NOTE TO
SUBSCRI-
BERS

CABLE INFORMATION was launched in March, 1972, the subscription year running from March through February. The monthly newsletter is designed to be a cumulative resource, hence all subscriptions begin with the first issue of each year. As of January 1, 1974, the subscription year will be conformed to the calendar year. This means that Vol. II will have only 10 issues (March-December 1973). Current subscribers will receive the January and February issues of 1974 to round out their 12 issues. Their renewals will be for the balance of 1974 and will cost \$8.00. New subscriptions will continue to be at the \$10.00 rate.

NEW
RESOUR-
CES

Just received is Vol. I, #1, Oct-Nov. 1973 of BLUE SKY, "a newsletter published in Boulder and Denver, by a group of people in the Rocky Mountain region to develop an information exchange between groups, municipalities, and individuals on cable and community television." Contributors listed are: The City of Boulder; Boulder Public Library; Boulder Cable Communications Study Committee; Boulder County Cable TV Study Committee; Denver Community Video Center, National Association for Media Action. BLUE SKY is a bi-monthly. Subscriptions are \$5.00 personal, \$10.00 Businesses, Institutions or Sustaining. (Write: BLUE SKY, c/o Tom Cross, P.O. Box 1773, Boulder, Colo. 80302).

The American School Journal for Sept. 1973 carries an excellent 8-page article by Associate Editor David L. Martin titled: "Cable TV" Don't let it tear your community or your schools apart." Sub-headings: "Cable TV is giving boardmen, as community leaders, a rare chance to be public heroes," "Take it easy: don't rush to award a cable franchise." (Single copy \$2.00 from Am. School Journal, 800 State National Bank Plaza, Evanston, Ill. 60201).

ASPEN NOTEBOOK: Cable and Continuing Education (192 pp., \$3.95, from Communications and Society, Suite 232, 770 Welch Road, Palo Alto, Cal. 94304) is in two parts. Part I describes the current status of continuing education, examines the history of educational uses of TV and explores the prospects being created by cable for continuing education. Part II contains additional source and reference materials and describes three TV-supported educational programs.

Vol. 1, #2 of COMMUNITY VIDEO REPORT, quarterly publication of the Washington Community Video Center, Inc., P.O. Box 21068, Washington D.C. 20009, includes a "Metro Cable Round-up" of cable developments in Washington, D.C. and contiguous areas in Maryland and Virginia. Other articles: Action Plan for Cable in Washington D.C.; Big Brother is Here, Health Communications - Toward a Humane Society, Women Organize Around Cable TV. (Subscriptions: \$2.50 to individuals \$10.00 to organizations).

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